



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 1

1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

January 26, 2000

Jan Reitsma, Director
Department of Environmental Management
235 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908-5767

Dear Mr. Reitsma:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed its review of Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's (DEM) revisions to its surface water quality standards adopted on March 25, 1999, and effective on April 14, 1999. These revisions amend the State Water Quality Regulations adopted on August 6, 1997. The specific revisions to the standards are described below.

1. Appendix A of the standards are revised to upgrade waters within a 300-foot radius of the Fort Adams marine sewer outfall from Class SB1 to SA and waters within a 600-foot radius of the outfall are upgraded from SB to SA. Both of these changes in classification reflect the elimination of Fort Adams marine sewer outfall.
2. In Appendix B, DEM revised RI's freshwater ammonia criteria (Table 3.A) to reflect EPA's 1998 *Update of Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Ammonia*. In addition, consistent with EPA's 1998 Criteria, the State adopted cold season chronic criteria for ammonia for the period November 1 to April 30 that are applicable to the entire Blackstone River, the main stem of the Pawtuxet River, and the Woonasquatucket River from Georgiaville Pond to the confluence with the Moshassuck River. For these waters, cold season criteria of 3 times the chronic criteria are applied based on a finding by the State that there are no sensitive life stages of any fish species ordinarily present in numbers affecting the sustainability of populations. This finding is supported by a letter from Alan D. Libby, Principal Fisheries Biologist, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Fish and Wildlife to EPA dated December 8, 1999.

EPA understands that DEM is currently drafting additional revisions of its ammonia criteria in response to EPA's 1999 *Update of Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Ammonia*. EPA will review and approve subsequent revisions to the State's standards as appropriate.

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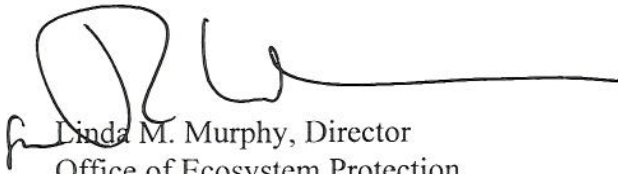
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I hereby approve these revisions, pursuant to Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act and 40 CFR Part 131, based on my determination that the approved revisions are consistent with the requirements of Section 303 of the Act.

Please feel free to contact me or either Robert Mendoza (617) 918-1591 or David Turin (617) 918-1598 of my staff if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Linda M. Murphy, Director
Office of Ecosystem Protection

cc: Alicia Good, RIDEM
Vernon Lang, USFWS
Chris Mantzaris, NMFS
Fred Leutner, EPA SASD 4305
Susan Sullivan, NEIWPCC